

Speaker Gingrich. Well, let me just say, if I could for a second, Mr. President, I think both the House and Senate hope to get those bills down here today so that the—the AFDC and the—as the President mentioned the other day on television.

Q. What are the chances of reopening the Government, Mr. Speaker?

Speaker Gingrich. I think we're going to talk about that now.

Q. Mr. Speaker, do you feel like a dog being wagged by its tail? [Laughter]

Speaker Gingrich. It's amazing you guys get paid for some of these questions, on the eve of Christmas. Merry Christmas.

Q. No, it's not my expression; it's the President's analysis.

The President. I never called the Speaker a dog. [Laughter]

Q. No, I know you didn't.

Speaker Gingrich. And I'm deeply grateful. [Laughter]

Q. Mr. President, do you think you can get a framework of a deal by Christmas?

The President. I'm prepared to—let me just say, I'm prepared to just keep working. I think all of us want to have Christmas with our families, but beyond that, I'm prepared to keep working. And I'm going to do everything I can to succeed, and that's what we're going to talk about.

Q. Mr. Speaker—

The President. Thank you. We really need to go to work.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:52 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement With Congressional Leaders on Budget Negotiations

December 22, 1995

Today we had good meetings which built on the progress made in yesterday's discussions. Staff will prepare further analysis to clarify options for the budget advisory group, which will then advise the principals on outstanding issues. Following the meeting of the budget advisory group, the principals will meet again next Friday afternoon.

NOTE: This statement was announced jointly with Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Robert Dole, Senate majority leader.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

December 18

In the afternoon, the President had telephone conversations with Senate majority leader Bob Dole and Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich on budget negotiations.

The President announced his intention to appoint Robert M. Lyford to the U.S. Military Academy Board of Visitors.

December 19

In the late afternoon, the President had separate meetings with Senate majority leader Bob Dole and Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, and Senate minority leader Thomas A. Daschle and House minority leader Richard A. Gephardt to discuss budget negotiations.

In the evening, the President had telephone conversations with Senators Arlen Specter and Christopher J. Dodd on securities legislation.

December 20

In the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with Senate majority leader Bob Dole and Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich on budget negotiations.

The President declared a major disaster in the State of Georgia as a result of severe storms and tornadoes on November 7 and 8.

December 21

The President announced his intention to appoint Gerard D. DiMarco to the Board of Trustees of the Christopher Columbus Fellowship Foundation.